

03/21/1994

Revised by M. Tolson

VDHR Reconnaissance Survey Form

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HISTORIC RESOURCES  
PROPERTY SURVEY FORM  
RECONNAISSANCE LEVEL

IDENTIFICATION INFORMATION

104-374

VDHR File # ~~104-0220-000~~

~~104-0246~~

Property Name:

Historic

Hotel Gleason/Albemarle Hotel/Imperial Cafe

NR Property Category: Building

Wuzit: Office/Commercial

Tax Code: Section Parcel

32 167

County/City: Charlottesville (City)

USGS Map:

USGS Quad: Charlottesville East

ADDRESS/LOCATION INFORMATION

Address: 617 - 619 West Main Street

Location:

Vicinity of: Municipality:

ZIP: 22901

PROPERTY CLASSIFICATION INFORMATION

Property Boundaries:

Ownership: Private

RESOURCE COUNT -

#	Category	Contributing?
1	Building	Contributing

TOTAL: 1

Contrib: 1

Non-Contrib: 0

WUZIT COUNT -

#	Wuzit	Contributing?
1	Office/Commercial	Contributing

TOTAL: 1

Contrib: 1

Non-Contrib: 0

# RESOURCE - GENERAL DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION

## Resource Level:

Estimated Construction Date: 1896

Source of Date: Tax Records

Physical Status: Existing

Condition: Good

Threat: None Known

Degree of Historic Integrity:

Association:

Design:

Feeling:

Location:

Materials:

Setting:

Workmanship:

## PRIMARY RESOURCE RECONNAISSANCE DESCRIPTION

Architectural Style/Derivative: Victorian (Vernacular Italianate)

# of Stories: 4.0 # of Bays Wide: 6 # of Bays Deep: 5

Arch Config: Geo Config:

Footprint:

Component	#	Form/Treatment	Material	Matr'l Treatment
Foundation			Brick/Stone	
Roof		Flat	Not Visible	
Windows		sash	Wood	1/1 Double-hung

## Brief Architectural Description of Primary Resource:

The Hotel Gleason/Albemarle Hotel building presents a three-bay, three-storey pressed-brick facade raised above the ground-floor recessed loggia. The loggia is supported on four Corinthian columns and covers a recessed display-window front (much altered). The loggia is covered with a pressed-tin coved ceiling. The columns of the loggia support a simple cornice from which rise the three floors above. The two flanking bays are inset one-brick's depth from the plane of the central bay and the corners; and these recesses are lined with rounded brick on the sides and molded egg-and-dart bricks above the fourth floor. The central bay at second floor level consists of a portico-in-antis, with two square columns with inset panels standing on pedestals supporting an elaborately beswagged entablature of pressed tin. A wide, Palladian window is located within the recess of the portico. Flanking windows on the second floor are one-over-one light, double-hung sash with wide molded brick surrounds. Fourth floor windows match those of the second, with the central bay's being paired and slightly narrower. Third floor fenestration follows fourth, but window heads are semi-circular rather than square. A simple boxy, overhanging cornice crowns the facade. When the Imperial Cafe was purchased in 1911 to become part of the Hotel Gleason, the original building was

either extensively remodeled or completely rebuilt so that its facade conformed -- although with lateral compression because of a narrow lot -- to the hotel facade.

Brief Architectural Description of Additions and Alterations  
See Architectural Description and Historical Description.

Brief Architectural Description of Secondary Resources:

Potentially Contributes to Historic District:

Potentially Associated with NR Multiple Property:

Architectural and Historical Summary:

#### HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION

In April 1896, Michael S. Gleason bought the lot immediately adjacent to his store and saloon at 611 West Main Street from the executors of Caroline M. Hase (City DB 7-252). Gleason immediately sold the western 28 feet of the lot to Henrietta H. Hase (DB 7-117); and a June 1896 agreement with Hase (DB 7-253) to share the party wall indicates his new building under construction. 1897 tax records show new buildings on both lots: Gleason's Hotel Gleason (\$12,000) and Hase's Imperial Cafe (\$3,000) - the latter described in a later reference (DB 10-350) as a new three-storey, pressed-brick front store building. The years 1910 and 1911 saw the consolidation by J. L. Veal and George D. Smith of the Hotel Gleason (DB 22-74) and the Imperial Cafe (DB 22-207) into an expanded "New Hotel Gleason" (DB 24-209). Improvements included on the Tax records of 1912 and 1914 note the extensive renovation of the Imperial Cafe (619 W. Main) to conform to the Hotel Gleason (617) facade and probably expansion of both buildings. In 1933 the Hotel Gleason, Inc. was sold for indebtedness (DB 80-399), and in October 1934 ownership passed to the Albemarle Hotel Corp. (DB 83-366). By the time Charles W. Hurt purchased the property in 1970, the Albemarle Hotel had deteriorated and was being used as a hotel for transients. In August, 1976 the City condemned the building and the Hotel closed. While stores occupied the lower floor for the next year or so, the building was mostly vacant between 1977 and 1981, when the building was extensively rehabilitated as part of the City's Starr Hill Community Development Block Grant neighborhood revitalization program.

#### SIGNIFICANCE & RELATION TO EVALUATION CRITERIA

This four-storey brick hotel exhibits many Victorian details, quite a number of which are not found on any other building in the City. Its highly articulated facade features arched and grouped windows, brick pilasters, a recessed loggia with cast iron Corinthian columns, and a small second storey portico-in-antis with an elaborate pressed metal entablature. The hotel is listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Charlottesville Multiple Resource Area. Following the route of the old Three-Notched Road, West Main Street has been a major thoroughfare since Colonial days, as well as being the link between Charlottesville and the University of Virginia since the early 19th century. The opening of the Union Station at the intersection of the railroad lines in 1885

made it the transportation hub of this part of the state. The Hotel Gleason opened in 1896, the first large, modern hotel in the City. It proved to be one of the most successful, operating for three-quarters of a century - first as the Hotel Gleason and later as the Albemarle Hotel - and sustaining its popularity after the automobile had replaced the railroads as the principal means of travel and all of the other West Main Street hotels had closed. Although replaced as the City's "best" hotel, it maintained its high standards and kept its Number Two position until the 1950s. It continued operation, mainly as a residential hotel, until the late 1970s. Despite some alterations and the loss of its annex when it was renovated in 1981, the Hotel retains enough original fabric to be a splendid example of the Victorian style. It remains a prominent landmark on West Main Street where it recalls an earlier era of transportation and lodging. It would be one of the most important buildings in a West Main Street Historic District, and it is surely worthy of preservation.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

Type of Record	Citation
City Records	Charlottesville City Deed Book
City Directory	Charlottesville City Directory

#### PHOTOGRAPHIC/DRAWINGS DOCUMENTATION

##### MISSING DATA ELEMENT

Media	VDHR Neg #	Frames	Date
B&W 35mm photos	13468	9 - 12	1/ /1994

#### CRM MANAGEMENT EVENTS

##### MISSING DATA ELEMENT

CRM Event	Agency/Organization	Date
Survey	Community Development-Bibb/Huppert	/ /1977
IPS data entry-PAVA (Smead)		